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ABSTRACT

Because most college students enroll in college immediately after completing high school, the percentage of high school completers enrolled in college the October after finishing high school is an indicator of the total proportion of that year's high school completers who will ever enroll in college. The percentage enrolling not only reflects the accessibility of higher education to high school completers but also shows the value completers place on attending college as compared to working, entering the military, starting families, or pursuing other interests. Statistics are presented in data and graphs for 1972-1996, and show the percentage of high school completers ages 16-24 who were enrolled in college the October after completing high school, by type of institution, family income, and race or ethnicity. (EMK)

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INDICATOR OF THE MONTH

NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATION STATISTICS

Immediate transition from high school to college

March 1999

Since most college students enroll in college immediately after completing high school, the percentage of high school completers enrolled in college the October after finishing high school is an indicator of the total proportion of that year's high school completers who will ever enroll in college. The percentage enrolling not only reflects the accessibility of higher education to high school completers, but also shows the value completers place on attending college as compared to working, entering the military, starting families, or pursuing other interests.

- Between 1985 and 1996, the percentage of high school completers going directly to college increased from 58 to 65 percent.
- Between 1985 and 1996, high school completers from high-income families were more likely than their counterparts from low-income families to go directly to college after completing high school.
- Between 1990 and 1996, the higher the education level of a student's parents, the more likely the student was to enroll in college the year after completing high school.
- The percentage of black high school completers going directly to college increased substantially between 1973 and 1995.

Percentage of high school completers ages 16–24 who were enrolled in college the October after completing high school, by type of institution, family income, and race/ethnicity: October 1972–96

				Family income[1]				Race/ethnicity[2]				
				Low		Middle	High	White	Black		Hispanic	
		Type of institution			3-year					3-year		3-year
October	Total	2-year	4-year	Annual	average	Annual	Annual	Annual	Annual	average	Annual	average
1972	49.2	—	—	26.1	(3)	45.2	63.8	49.7	44.6	(3)	45.0	(3)
1973	46.6	14.9	31.7	20.3	(3)	40.9	64.4	47.8	32.5	41.4	54.1	48.7
1975	50.7	18.2	32.6	31.2	(3)	46.2	64.5	51.1	41.7	44.4	58.0	52.5
1977	50.6	17.5	33.1	27.7	32.8	44.2	66.3	50.8	49.5	46.8	50.8	48.5
1979	49.3	17.5	31.8	30.5	31.5	43.2	63.2	49.9	46.7	45.3	45.0	46.4
1981	53.9	20.5	33.5	33.6	33.0	49.2	67.6	54.9	42.7	40.4	52.1	49.2
1983	52.7	19.2	33.5	34.6	34.0	45.2	70.3	55.0	38.2	37.9	54.2	47.3
1985	57.7	19.6	38.1	40.2	36.2	50.6	74.6	60.1	42.2	39.6	51.0	46.5
1987	56.8	18.9	37.9	36.9	37.8	50.0	73.8	58.6	52.2	44.5	33.5	44.9
1989	59.6	20.7	38.9	48.1	45.8	55.4	70.7	60.7	53.4	48.2	55.1	51.6
1990	60.1	20.1	40.0	46.7	44.7	54.4	76.6	63.0	46.8	48.9	42.7	51.7
1991	62.5	24.9	37.7	39.5	42.3	58.4	78.2	65.4	46.4	47.2	57.2	51.6
1992	61.9	23.0	38.9	40.9	43.6	57.0	79.0	64.3	48.2	50.1	55.0	58.1
1993	61.5	22.4	39.1	50.4	44.1	56.9	79.3	62.9	55.6	51.5	62.2	55.4
1994	61.9	21.0	40.9	41.0	41.9	57.8	78.4	64.5	50.8	52.5	49.1	55.0
1995	61.9	21.5	40.4	34.2	41.3	56.1	83.4	64.3	51.2	52.6	53.7	51.2
1996	65.0	23.1	41.9	43.6	(3)	62.7	78.0	67.4	56.0	(3)	50.8	(3)

— Not available. Data for type of institution were not collected until 1973.

[1] Low income is the bottom 20 percent of all family incomes; high income is the top 20 percent of all family incomes, and middle income is the 60 percent in-between.

[2] Included in the total but not shown separately are high school completers from other racial/ethnic groups.

[3] Due to small sample sizes for the low income, black, and Hispanic categories, 3-year averages were also calculated for each category. For example, the 3-year average for blacks in 1973 is the average-percentage of black high school completers ages 16–24 who were enrolled in college the October after completing high school in 1972, 1973, and 1974. Thus, 3-year averages cannot be calculated for 1972 and 1996, and for groups of 3 years in which some data are not available (e.g., 1973–75 for the low income category).

NOTE: Details may not add to totals due to rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, October Current Population Surveys.

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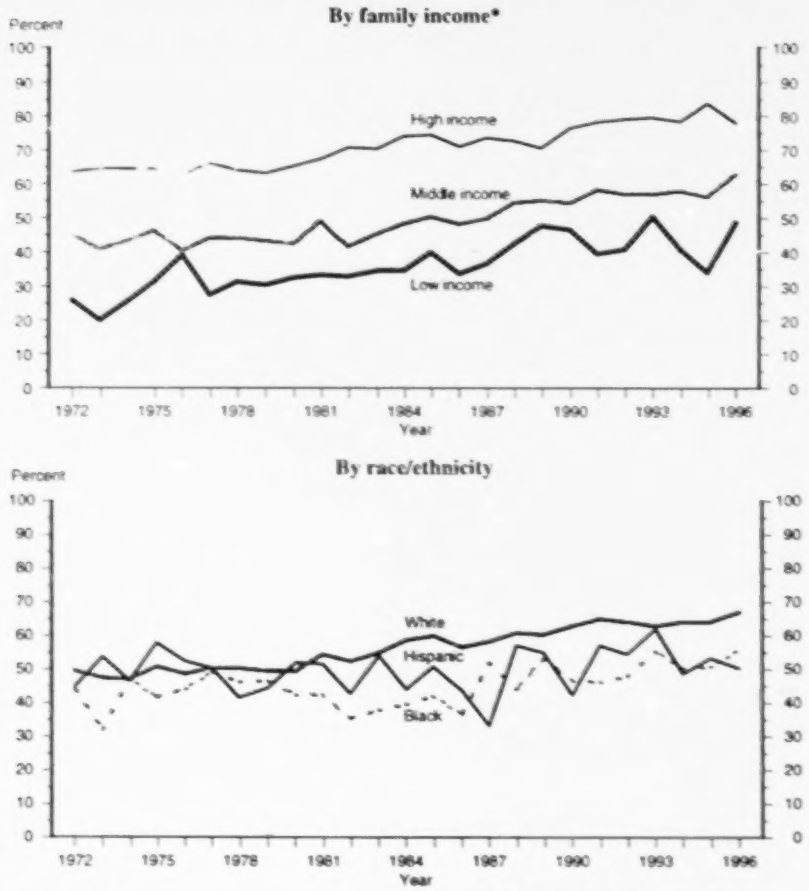
Percentage of high school completers ages 16–24 who were enrolled in college the October after completing high school: October 1972–96



* Low income is the bottom 20 percent of all family incomes; high income is the top 20 percent of all family incomes; and middle income is the 60 percent in-between. Data on family income were not available in 1974.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, October Current Population Surveys.

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